



October 25, 2017

My name is Katherine Grant, and I am the Executive Director of the Community Alliance. I appreciate the opportunity to offer this testimony in strong support of HB 4674 to study and assess our state's long-term care needs, and to provide information about the need for long term supports and services for people with disabilities.

Community Alliance has been providing direct services to people with developmental disabilities since 1986. We have the distinction of being one of the first agencies in Washtenaw County providing support to developmentally disabled adults that were discharged from Michigan's psychiatric hospitals. Today we provide direct service to 44 adults and to nearly 500 adults and children through the Fiscal Intermediary Program across southeastern Michigan. Both programs are funded through Medicaid contracts.

Developmental Disabilities are a host of delays or impairments diagnosed prior to age 22. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime. It is important to understand that there is no cure for developmental disabilities, but there are therapies, devices and techniques that can be implemented that make the impairments easier to manage. As people with developmental disabilities age there is an early and progressive decline in health. In most cases, individuals with developmental disabilities require some level of support to maintain independence in their homes and communities. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) 15% of children aged 3 – 17 have one or more developmental disability. To make that a real number: according to ChildStats.Gov, the number of children in this age group is over 47 million. Using CDC's estimate of 15%: 7,125,000 children in the United States have a developmental disability. As for adults, the last census data from 2010 found 2,144,000 adults (18 years and older) had developmental disabilities including autism, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities. Children are born every day with developmental disabilities and these children will grow old with their disability. It is a lifetime diagnosis. They will need long term services and supports to live a dignified life.

Statistically, the people that Community Alliance cares for fit these demographics:

Thirty-two percent (32%) are over 55 years old (eldest is 79 years). Some of our clients in this group have siblings who are active in their lives, but most no longer have living parents or family members able to help provide care. All have been diagnosed with a moderate to severe intellectual disability and at least one other impairment and receive 24/7 support services in their home.

Twenty-three percent (23%) are aged 40-54 years. They have aging parents who struggle with living on fixed incomes, mobility issues that impede their ability to engage in their child's life, and health challenges that sometimes require as much medical attention as their disabled child. The families in this age group are stressed by their own aging and have grave concerns that their children are well cared for as they face their declining years. Ultimately the families want to know, who will care for their children after they die. All receive 24/7 support services in their home.



Forty-five percent (45%), the largest cohort group, are **aged 20-39 years**. Our clients in this group are higher functioning and more independent than clients in other groups and may not need 24-hour support. Several attend college, are active in sports and community groups. The unique needs of this group are an important consideration as we develop programming moving forward. We strive to offer the optimum level of support to impact the highest level of outcome while retaining the greatest level of independence possible.

Our collective commitment to people with disabilities should be for their lifetime. It is up to all of us to protect their interests with policies that guarantee fair treatment and representation to people with disabilities. Passing this study bill will be an invaluable step toward allowing Michigan to better assess our long-term care needs in the coming years, and to plan to meet those needs in ways that afford the best possible care to our family members and our neighbors.

Thank you.

Katherine Grant